

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
29 October 1963

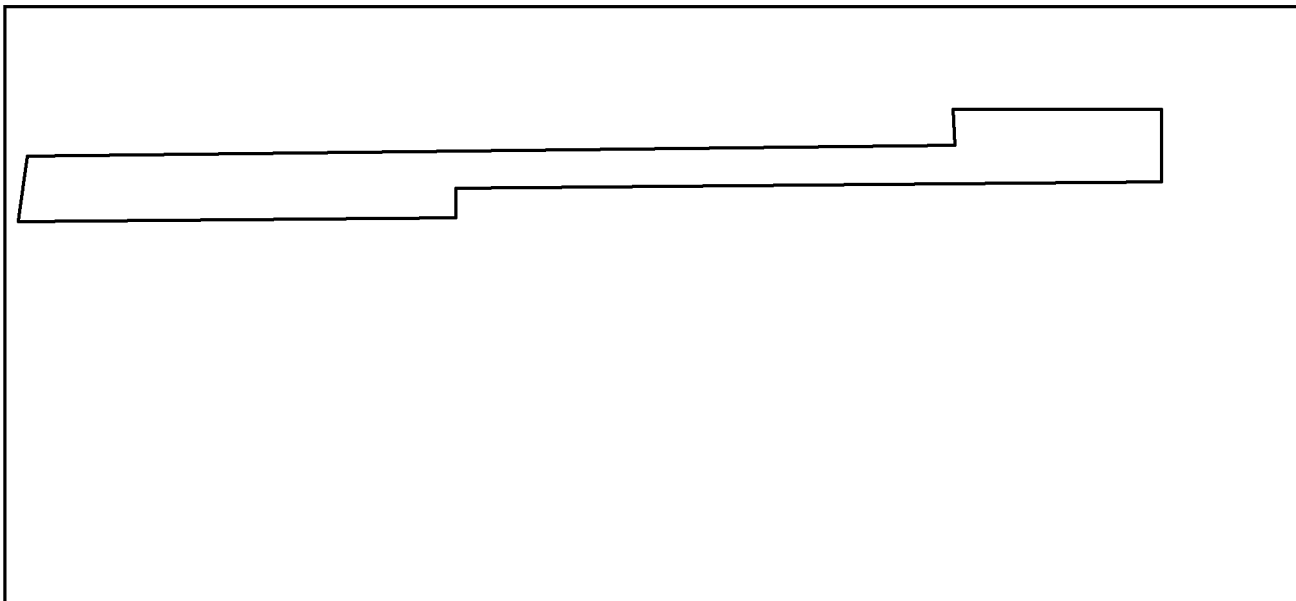
CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Background of Moroccan-Algerian Border
Skirmishes

1. The southern--Saharan--stretch of the Moroccan-Algerian border from Figuig to Spanish Sahara has never been demarcated. During France's administration of Morocco and Algeria, successive redefinitions of the administrative line separating the French Moroccan from the French Algerian jurisdiction tended to favor Algeria, which legally was a part of France, while Morocco was only a protectorate. Since Morocco became independent in 1956, the Moroccans--particularly the nationalist press--have laid claim to a substantial portion of the Sahara.

2. In 1958, when the Algerian rebels were operating in this Saharan area, the French and Moroccans informally agreed on respective operational zones so as to avoid conflict between their forces. Under this agreement, the "de facto" zone of French occupation was extended somewhat north and west of earlier lines, but the new line was not accorded any legal status. This line, however, apparently is the one adopted by the Algerians. The Moroccans insist that the true boundary is an earlier line, which places the posts of Hassi Beida and Tinjoub in Morocco. These posts are important because they are on a main caravan trail linking Colomb-Bechar and Tindouf.

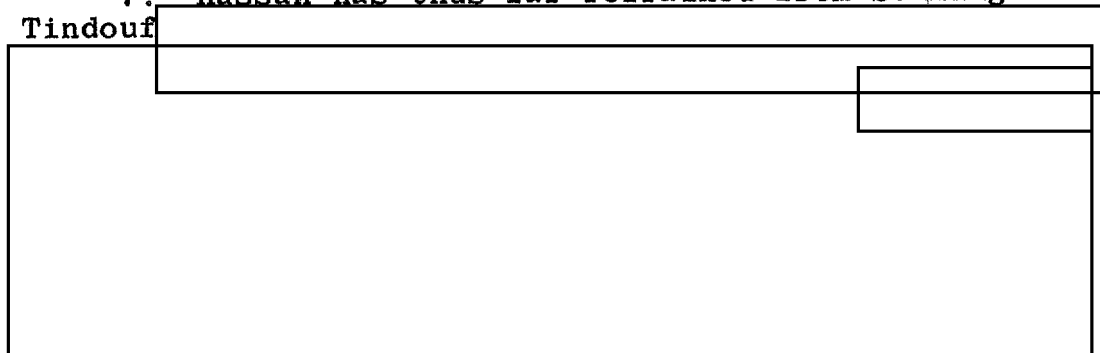
3. After Algeria became independent in mid-1962, border difficulties developed all along the southern Moroccan area. Several former French posts actually changed hands. However, few of these establishments were consistently occupied; many of them were inhabited only occasionally.



6. King Hassan, citing a 1961 agreement with Ferhat Abbas, then premier of the provisional Algerian Government, has vainly attempted to persuade President Ben Bella to negotiate with him on Morocco's territorial claims. Ben Bella has refused to negotiate, and his position was strengthened by the stand of the Organization of African Unity, which at its inaugural meeting in May called for adherence to African boundaries as defined by the ex-colonial powers.

7. Hassan has thus far refrained from seizing Tindouf

25X1
25X1



25X1

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

25X1